

Fresh Starts

When *Parks and Recreation* star **Rashida Jones** heard about the far-reaching work of the **International Rescue Committee**, she couldn't wait to pitch in

Since 1933, when Albert Einstein suggested that an organization be created to help people suffering Nazi persecution, the International Rescue Committee has come to the aid of millions of refugees in war and disaster zones. The IRC offers shelter, health care, and education to those in need across the globe.

How did you hear about the IRC?

About four years ago a childhood friend of mine did some work with the IRC in West Africa, finding girls who had been kidnapped by rebels and reuniting them with their estranged families. I was in complete awe and wanted to get involved.

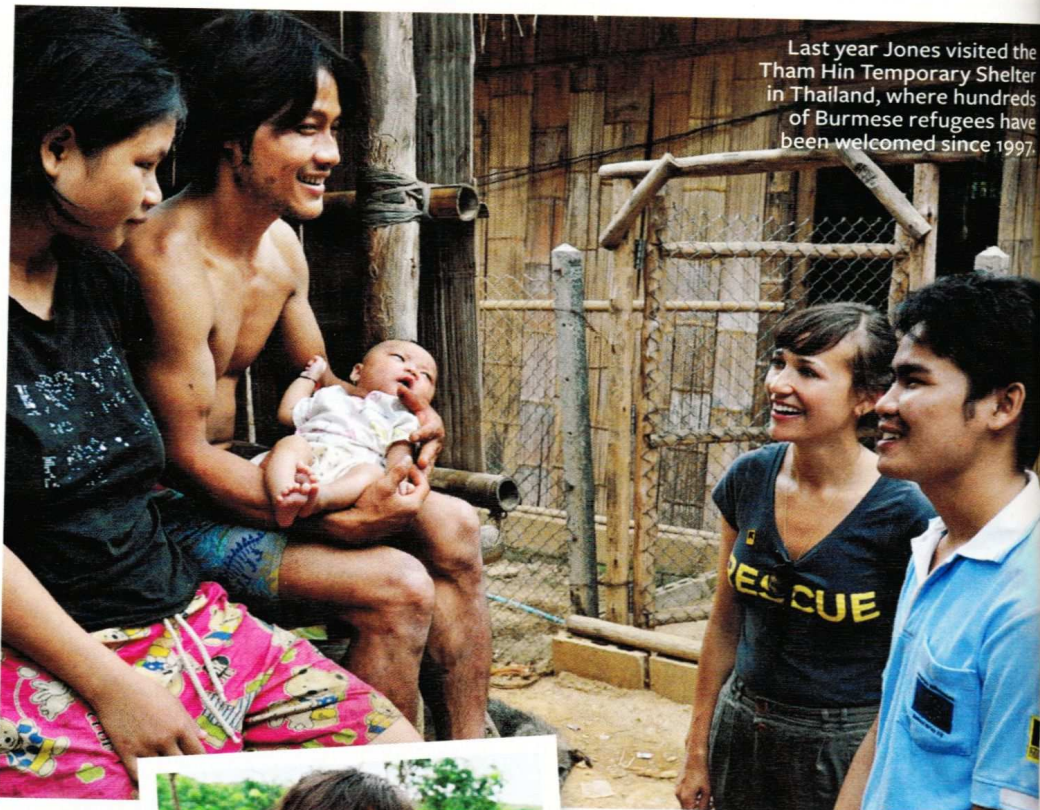
You recently visited an IRC settlement in Thailand. What struck you most about it?

The camp I visited, Tham Hin, was set up for refugees who have fled Burma for their safety. I was really impressed with the camp's infrastructure and how smoothly everything ran, like the health education program. There's a real commitment to quality of life there.

IRC has also helped bring refugees to the States. Have you met any of these folks?

Yes! In San Diego I met families that used to live in Tham Hin. The IRC has an urban garden in the city where people from all parts of Asia and Africa plant food from their homelands—like lemongrass or cassava—and sell it at a local farmers market.

And how were they doing? Pretty well, I think! The food was selling fast. And I know it sounds a bit hokey, but seeing these people from all over the world being able to negotiate and work together made me really happy. —SANDY M. FERNÁNDEZ



Last year Jones visited the Tham Hin Temporary Shelter in Thailand, where hundreds of Burmese refugees have been welcomed since 1997.



How You Can Help!



Donate at rescue.org: \$30 buys a flock of chickens for a family; \$52 pays for an expectant mom's health care.



Teach English to an IRC refugee. Follow @theIRC on Twitter to find opportunities in your area.



Like the IRC on Facebook to read Jones's blog posts, view videos, and get the latest news.